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US to stay in climate pact even without China

Published: 2010-02-17 05:18:14.0 BdST | Updated: 2010-02-17 05:18:14.0 BdST

The United States would remain a participant in the newly struck Copenhagen Accord on global warming even if other major polluting countries like China and India did not formally "associate" themselves with the deal, a high-ranking US official said on Tuesday.



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WASHINGTON, Feb 17 (bdnews24.com/Reuters) - The United States would remain a participant in the newly struck Copenhagen Accord on global warming even if other major polluting countries like China and India did not formally "associate" themselves with the deal, a high-ranking US official said on Tuesday.

Todd Stern, the lead US negotiator in international climate talks, was asked by a reporter whether the United States might pull out of the Copenhagen Accord if China and India do not formally sign on.

Stern responded: "No ... we have put forward our own submission. It's consistent with what President (Barack) Obama announced back in November, so I don't think it's a question of the US saying 'never mind ... that's not the plan.'"

Last month, the Obama administration informed the U.N. that it wanted to formally sign onto the non-binding climate control deal struck in Copenhagen in December. At the same time, it formally submitted its pollution-cutting goals.

The United States has offered to reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases blamed for global warming by around 17 percent by 2020, from 2005 levels. The final target would be

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set when domestic legislation is enacted.

On the question of whether they formally would be "associated" with the accord, Stern said, "China and India have conveyed something which is not entirely clear." He added, "I think that will get clarified though, that is my guess, over the course of the next few days."

But he said those countries, both major carbon polluters, have been "perfectly clear" in their carbon-reduction targets. China has sketched out a goal of cutting the amount of carbon produced per unit of economic output by 40 percent to 45 percent from 2005 levels. This "carbon intensity" goal would let emissions keep rising, but more slowly than economic growth.

India would try to cut its emissions intensity of gross domestic product by 20 percent to 25 percent from 2005 levels.

Supporters of strict international climate control steps hope the Copenhagen Accord can be built upon with the negotiation in coming months of a binding international treaty.

They hope all major polluting countries choose to list themselves at the top of the accord, or "associate" themselves, to give a much-needed boost to global negotiations.

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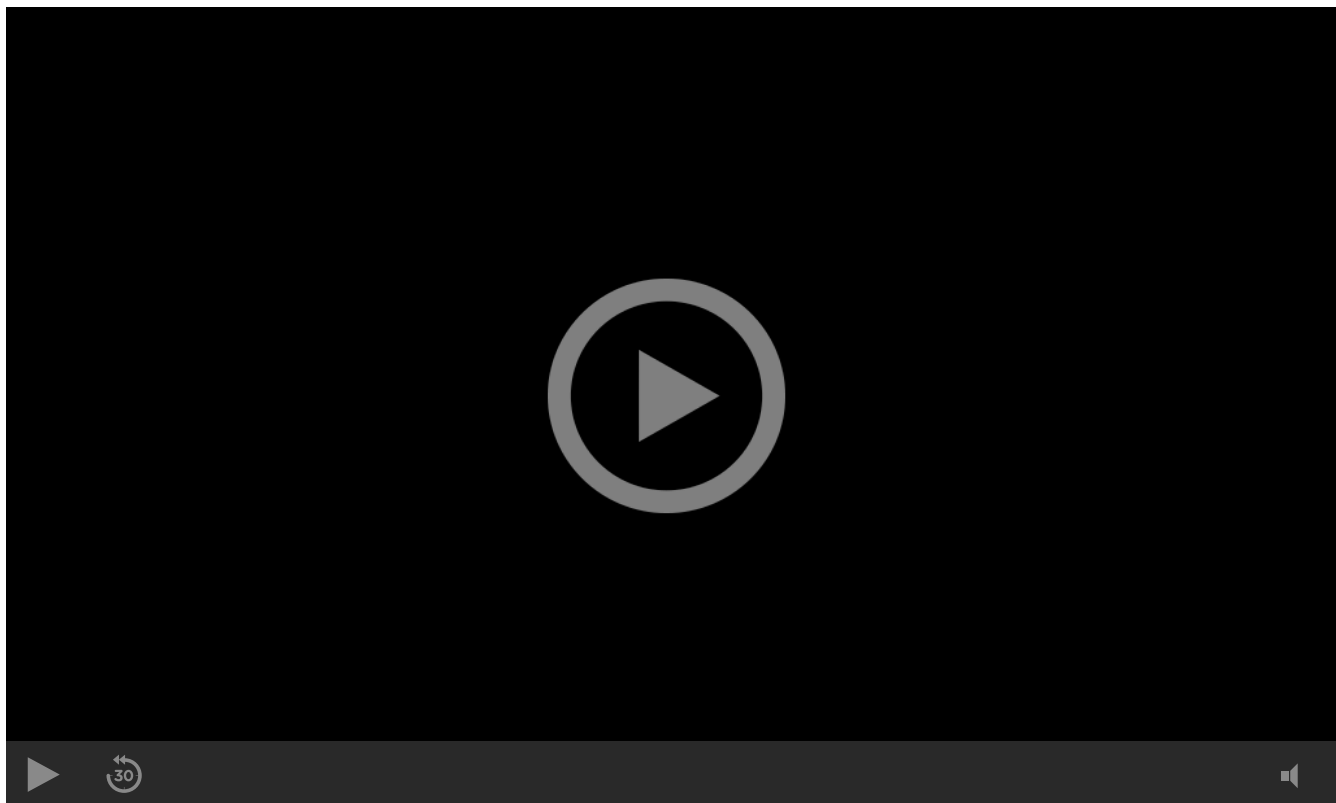


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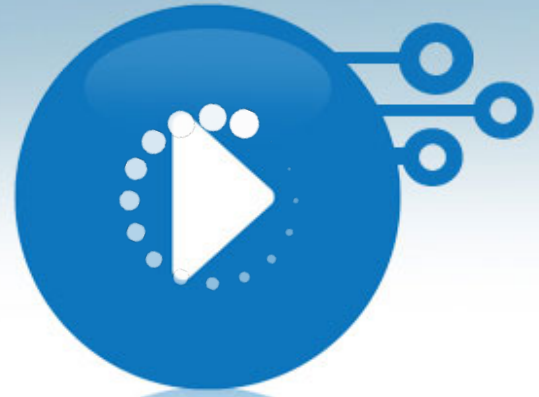
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